

## SNAKES, LIZARDS AND ALLIGATORS DESCEND ON TESSERACT SCHOOL

PARADISE VALLEY, ARIZONA—April 13, 2010—Snakes, lizards, alligators and an assortment of other reptiles will be spending the morning with students at Tesseract School on Thursday, April 15 from 9:15 to 10:30 a.m. for the school's seventh annual Herpetological Showcase. The Showcase and the classes leading up to it teach students the importance of desert conservation and desert safety in addition to information about specific reptiles.

The Showcase, which will be held in the Doubletree campus auditorium, is the culmination of a nine-week native and exotic reptiles unit that the fourth-graders study at school with the Phoenix Herpetological Society (PHS). Tesseract started working with the PHS seven years ago, and was the first school to participate in its educational outreach program, the Reptile Club.

“This is such a rich program, which truly teaches our students how to understand, respect and conserve reptiles and the desert in a practical, meaningful way,” said Nigel Taplin, head of Tesseract School. “As the weather warms up, it also helps instill critical safety tactics to prepare our students for how to respond if they encounter snakes or other reptiles while outdoors.”

Every year, two representatives from the PHS visit the school nine times during the unit, bringing reptiles with them each time. The students learn about the reptiles' behaviors, habitats, diets and what to do if they encounter any of these animals. They also learn which reptiles make good pets and which should never be chosen as pets. After a couple of meetings, the fourth-graders each choose a different reptile to research. On the ninth visit, they invite the entire school into the auditorium, where each fourth-grade student then presents information and answers questions about his or her specific reptile, with that reptile present in the auditorium.

“All of the students get so excited about this unit,” said Tesseract fourth-grade educator, Lauren Ross. “Part of our innovative curriculum and student-centered approach includes providing hands-on learning experiences whenever possible. It is thrilling for the students to be able to see and—in most cases—hold and touch the animals they have been researching for more than two months through the Internet, reference books and classroom visits with the Herpetological Society.”

The PHS is a nonprofit, volunteer-based foundation on a mission to conserve wildlife through education. The PHS rescues and rehabilitates native and exotic



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reptiles including snakes, lizards, Gila monsters, alligators and turtles. The foundation believes in teaching youth the importance of conservation, and it promotes co-existence, respect, understanding and responsible ownership in the reptile world.

In addition to activities associated with the exotic reptiles unit, Tesseract students also work with the PHS through the school's service-learning program, helping the PHS with building tortoise enclosures, cleaning out pens and helping with other tasks that aid in the care and welfare of the animals.

"We really enjoy working with Tesseract through this unit as well as through the school's service-learning program," noted Russ Johnson, president, Phoenix Herpetological Society. "It is our hope that the students we teach awareness and safety methods to become the teachers to their peers, parents and neighbors."

For more information about the Phoenix Herpetological Society, please visit [www.phoenixherp.com](http://www.phoenixherp.com).

#### About Tesseract:

A leader in education in the Valley, Tesseract School prepares students to excel in college and beyond, lead lives of purpose, and become ethical and compassionate citizens with a global perspective. Tesseract's innovative educational approach engages students in learning, enabling them to master the basics and become critical thinkers. As a non-profit, independent private school for students in preschool through grade 12, resources are directed to recruit and retain outstanding educators and continually enhance the school's two campuses in Phoenix and Paradise Valley. For information visit [www.tesseractschool.org](http://www.tesseractschool.org) or call 480.991.1770.

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